UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

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Administrative Committee on Coordination

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REPORT OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY ON ITS FIRST SESSION

(New York, 22 and 23 October 1996)

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INTRODUCTION

1. The ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality held its first session in New York on 22 and 23 October 1996. The agenda for the session, as adopted by the Committee, is contained in annex I, the list of participants in annex II and the terms of reference of the Committee in annex III. The session was chaired by Ms. Rosario Green, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and Senior Adviser to the United Nations Secretary-General on Gender Issues, who was designated by the Secretary-General to chair the Committee on behalf of the United Nations.

I. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION

A. Mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout the United Nations system

2. The Committee held an extensive discussion on the conceptual implications and practical requirements of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes of the United Nations system. In particular, it noted that mainstreaming was a responsibility of the United Nations system as a whole and of all staff in all policy and programme areas and in decision-making, starting at the highest level. The Committee would follow carefully and monitor regularly progress made throughout the United Nations system in incorporating a gender perspective in institutional structures, and in policies and programming.

3. The Committee emphasized the need for the inter-agency task forces set up by ACC for conference follow-up to fully integrate a gender perspective in their work, including at the country level. In view of the time-bound nature of the task forces, the Committee considered it essential that any follow-up arrangements that might be instituted after the work of the task forces had concluded be fully cognizant of and fully integrate a gender perspective at all stages of action. The Committee was ready to provide support and assistance in that regard, and called on ACC to underline the importance of integrating a gender perspective in the work of the task forces and in subsequent activities on integrated follow-up to global conferences.

B. Proposed agenda, date and venue for the next session of the Committee

4. It was agreed that the Committee would hold its second session at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 5 and 6 March 1997, immediately prior to the forty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The provisional agenda for the second session is contained in annex IV.

II. WORK OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

A. Action taken and decisions adopted by the Committee

5. The Committee held an extensive discussion on the goals and objectives that it wished to accomplish in keeping with its terms of reference, and decided on a number of issues to be dealt with in its short-term and long-term work programmes as described below.

1. Short-term work programme

Inter-action with ACC inter-agency task forces on Conference follow-up

6. The Committee agreed that its interaction with the ACC inter-agency task forces on conference follow-up was a priority, due to the time-bound nature of the task forces. The Committee decided to take the following steps:

(a) The Chairperson of the Committee would address a letter to the chairpersons of the task forces, expressing the Committee's concern to see a gender perspective fully reflected in their work, in particular in the output. The text of the letter is contained in annex V to the present report;

(b) The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) would serve as a link between the Committee and the task forces, supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in the case of the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All. Given the Committee's interest in indicators and in light of the work being done by the Women in Development (WID) Subgroup of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy in that regard, the Chairperson of the Committee would explore opportunities for information-sharing between the Subgroup and efforts under way on indicators within the inter-agency task forces;

(c) The Chairperson of the Committee expected to meet with the chairpersons of the task forces in November 1996 to pursue issues of cooperation, including the review of draft final reports and discussion of follow-up scenarios;

(d) Members of the Committee whose organizations were also members of any or all of the task forces were urged to strengthen their intra-agency coordination to ensure that their respective representatives on the task forces addressed gender concerns.

Mainstreaming

7. Based on the need to clarify further system-wide implications for mainstreaming, the Committee decided that work in that regard would continue, starting from the background paper that was before the Committee. That paper would be expanded to incorporate the experience of the system as a whole. It would serve as an input into the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997 (coordination segment), should it decide to take up the issue of gender mainstreaming, and into

preparation for the forty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in March 1997. The Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat would take the lead in preparation of the report, including requesting input from the United Nations system.

Indicators, evaluation of best practices and accountability

8. The Committee welcomed efforts under way within the JCGP WID Subgroup in a number of areas of direct interest and concern to the Committee. It was decided that three discussion papers would be prepared by the JCGP WID Subgroup for the next meeting of the Committee, covering indicators; parameters for evaluating best practices; and policy enforcement and accountability. UNFPA, as the Chair of the JCGP WID Subgroup, would take the lead in coordinating the preparation of those papers and providing a link with the Division for the Advancement of Women. All interested entities, including the World Bank and the International Labour Organization (ILO) as chairs of inter-agency task forces, were invited to provide their input to UNFPA by 15 January 1997.

Gender balance

9. The Committee held an extensive exchange of views on the question of gender balance in the secretariats of the United Nations system. Full support was expressed for the efforts undertaken by the Consultative Committee on Advisory Questions (CCAQ) and the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). It was agreed that the main responsibility for personnel-related issues rested with CCAQ and ICSC. In addition, the Committee wished to support the work of CCAQ and ICSC in order to highlight the importance that it attached to those issues, and would continue to seek information from them and to hold an exchange of views at its future sessions. ILO was requested to serve as a link between the Committee and ICSC and CCAQ.

2. Long-term work programme

10. The Committee agreed that a number of issues would require its ongoing attention or should be dealt with based on further inter-sessional preparatory work. In that regard, a number of issues were identified, as described below.

Work on indicators

11. In view of the discussion papers that were to be prepared for the second session of the Committee by the JCGP WID Subgroup, the Committee decided to consider any practical implications of the papers for its work and the work of the United Nations system as a whole, including but not limited to questions of the integrated follow-up to all United Nations conferences. In particular, the Committee noted that accountability for mainstreaming was not limited to economic and social areas and operational activities but extended into all areas in which the United Nations system had a mandate.

Interaction with ACC machinery

12. The Committee agreed that, although priority attention should be paid to interaction with the inter-agency task forces on conference follow-up, it would pursue the establishment of linkages with other ACC machinery as well. In that regard, three ACC subsidiary bodies, namely the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), CCAQ and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) were chosen for targeted efforts to establish cooperation and to develop mutually beneficial relationships on gender issues. It was agreed that a background note would be prepared for the second session of the Committee describing the major substantive and procedural issues dealt with by CCPOQ and IACSD to serve as the basis for a strategy discussion on further action. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in cooperation with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Division for the Advancement of Women would coordinate the preparation of that note.

Issue-specific concerns

13. The Committee reviewed a number of specific issues that required the attention of the Committee with regard to coordination and/or mainstreaming. The following were retained as a preliminary list of issues that would be taken up in its long-term work programme:

(a) Women in the peace process and in conflict resolution, and violence against women. Since a large number of entities had a strong interest in those issues, it was decided that they would be taken up at the next session of the Committee. The question of training for United Nations peacekeeping forces on gender issues and women's human rights would also be addressed. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) would coordinate the preparation of a discussion note, and all interested entities were requested to provide input to UNHCR by 10 January 1997;

(b) Participation of women at the national level and in all areas: opportunities and constraints for the United Nations system to strengthen women's participation, including women's non-governmental organizations;

(c) Gender training;

(d) Implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001: progress and obstacles, in anticipation of the mid-term review in 1998.

B. Summary of discussion

14. The meeting was opened by Ms. Rosario Green, who welcomed the participants and made an opening statement. She invited the Committee to build on the long experience of the United Nations system and of the intergovernmental machinery in dealing with women and gender issues so as to move forward the process of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes system-wide. She paid tribute to the work done by the former Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women over its 20 years of existence.

15. Ms. Green outlined five challenges and opportunities for the new standing Committee of the ACC, based on its terms of reference. First, mainstreaming represented a responsibility of the United Nations system as a whole and of all staff in all its policy, programming and decision-making responsibilities, starting at the highest level. That message would need to be communicated more effectively across the board to accomplish changes in institutional structures and cultures so that mainstreaming could become permanent and irreversible. To that end, a clear and unambiguous conceptual voice would be necessary. The mission or advocacy statement on the advancement and empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming should spell out the United Nations system's joint approach, reflect commitment and constitute the basis for further action. Second, there was a need to ensure that the work of coordination and mainstreaming went beyond the economic and social field and operational activities to include all those areas that have traditionally been considered gender-neutral. Third, although a two-pronged approach to women and gender issues, i.e., targeting and mainstreaming, remained essential, better accountability would be necessary, especially with regard to resource allocation for women-specific programming and in mainstreaming efforts. Practical tools to monitor performance in resource allocation and mobilization in the implementation of the Platform for Action would be necessary. Fourth, there was a need to improve and strengthen communication among participants, and to provide better and more efficient linkages between Headquarters and the field level, including the regional level. Linkages to other ACC machinery, especially in the integrated follow up to recent United Nations conferences, would be important. Finally, there was a need for greater focus in United Nations system activities that involved women and gender issues in order to avoid overlapping and duplication, and to strengthen comparative advantages and highlight specific expertise. The system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, should serve as basis for collaboration and synergies.

16. The Chairperson emphasized that the major purpose of the first session of the Committee would be to hold an exchange of views on the objectives and goals that the Committee would wish to accomplish in light of its terms of reference, and to agree on a work programme, both short-term and long-term, and the working methods of the Committee. She invited the Committee to emphasize accountability, and to that end to reach a clear agreement on the outputs that should be achieved over time.

17. The members of the Committee welcomed the establishment of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality as a standing committee of ACC. They conveyed the full support of the heads of their respective entities for the Committee and its work. Support was expressed for the terms of reference of the Committee, as adopted by ACC, and for the process that led to their finalization.

18. The convening of the first meeting of the Committee was welcomed. It was suggested that future meetings of the Committee should not all take place in New York so as to facilitate the participation of representatives headquartered in Europe or elsewhere. The need to avoid overlap, to the extent possible, with the 8 March observations of International Women's Day was noted. It was urged that documents be supplied well in advance of Committee sessions.

1. Goals and objectives of the Committee

19. The Committee agreed that the mainstreaming of a gender perspective would be an ongoing concern of the Committee. Although there was full commitment to mainstreaming, the Committee was expected to provide clarity and guidance on its conceptual and practical dimensions and implications for the United Nations system. It was agreed that mainstreaming was the responsibility of all staff, in all areas, including the highest level of management. It has institutional, programmatic and operational dimensions, and a global approach that targets all countries should be pursued. A lack of accountability mechanisms was noted, as well as a lack of enforcement of policies. That would be an area in which the Committee should develop tools and approaches.

20. Better measurements were needed of the allocation of resources, both in targeting and in mainstreaming. The input of resources, as well as their impact, remained largely unknown. In that area, indicators and a common assessment basis were considered important elements for accountability. Similarly, impact assessments of gender training should be undertaken, and such assessments should have an accountability dimension.

21. The Committee agreed that gender issues and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective needed to be pursued in areas beyond economic and social issues and development efforts. Potential difficulties in proceeding in that direction were acknowledged. The importance was emphasized of having a focused and practical approach in the work of the Committee so as to provide direct support to the efforts of focal points at the agency level. It was also suggested that the Committee's work programme be targeted directly at the country level.

22. The Committee emphasized that linkages with the inter-agency task forces on conference follow-up should be a high priority since the task forces were time-bound and expected to finish their work early in 1997. The task forces aimed to achieve better implementation of Conference outcomes at the national level through United Nations system cooperation in providing effective assistance to Governments. The mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all aspects of their work, including the use of information and data disaggregated by sex and age, in analysis and in their final reports and other outputs was considered essential. The Committee also agreed that emphasis needed to be given to the phase following the conclusion of the work of the inter-agency task forces to ensure that a gender perspective was reflected in the next phase of implementation as well.

23. The Committee was briefed on the work of the JCGP WID Subgroup on the policy review of the Beijing Platform for Action. Notably, the JCGP WID Subgroup would continue the development of indicators, in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division. That work would be shared with the Committee so as to avoid duplication. Work on assessing experience with mainstreaming was ongoing and was expected to result in a guidance note that could be useful in the work of the Committee.

24. The Committee discussed the need to avoid overlapping and duplication, and to ensure that comparative advantages were fully utilized. At a time of financial constraints and major change, the linkages and networking between

agencies and bodies should be strengthened in the light of specific mandates so as to arrive at a better division of labour. It was proposed to consider the preparation of matrices to guide the United Nations system with regard to the activities that various entities were undertaking. Evaluation and monitoring would need to be included as major elements. Difficulties with preparing such matrices in some agencies were acknowledged. In that regard, the need for implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, which was based on the contributions of all entities of the United Nations system, was noted.

25. The Committee stressed the importance of best practices, and of lessons learned in mainstreaming, and agreed that they should be widely shared. These are also essential in the external communications of the system. A clear and unambiguous message, and guidance on the mainstreaming approach would facilitate the presentation of the work of the system to a larger constituency through public information activities.

26. The importance of addressing the advancement and empowerment of women within a human rights framework was acknowledged. It was noted that agencies should give special attention to women's human rights in addressing gender issues.

2. Work programme of the Committee

27. The Committee agreed to develop both a short-term work programme to last until its next session and a long-term work programme of two to four years. It was agreed that the long-term programmes of work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council would serve as guidance.

28. With regard to its short-term work programme, the Committee agreed that it would include the following: (a) interaction with the ACC inter-agency task forces on conference follow-up and other ACC machinery; (b) the preparation of a mission or advocacy statement for consideration by ACC; (c) the conceptual and practical implications of mainstreaming, in particular in the light of the consideration of that theme by the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segment, in 1997; and (d) issues of policy enforcement and accountability. It was also noted that the current system-wide discussion on reform should be used as a window of opportunity to present the case for system-wide mainstreaming, especially practical steps on how to do it.

29. The Committee welcomed the JCGP WID Subgroup proposal to make available for the next meeting of the Committee a number of discussion papers covering the following aspects of its work: (a) indicators (to cover work that was done both within and outside the United Nations system); (b) lessons learned (in particular to address parameters for assessing lessons learned in mainstreaming); (c) policy enforcement and accountability. All members of the Committee were invited to provide input and suggestions to the JCGP WID Subgroup. The Subgroup consists of UNFPA (Chair), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNIFEM, IFAD and the World Food Programme (WFP). The Chair of the JCGP WID Subgroup will link with the Division for the Advancement of Women.

30. It was suggested that the Committee broaden its interaction with ACC machinery beyond the task forces as a short-term and a long-term goal, which is considered an important aspect of moving mainstreaming into all substantive areas of work of the United Nations system. Such a strategy could include participation of Committee members in other Committees as representatives of their agencies; the formal transmission of certain reports, conclusions etc. to another body for its consideration; influencing the agenda of other committees; possibilities for direct representation of the Committee itself in other Committees could also be explored within the rules governing the ACC machinery. Three bodies - CCAQ, CCPOQ and IACSD - were chosen for targeted efforts to establish cooperation and to develop mutually beneficial relationships. The example of the efforts of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in that regard was considered illustrative of the strategy. It was also noted that members of the Committee should establish contact with the task managers of IACSD, who are preparing review reports for the special session of the General Assembly in June 1997 on follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to ensure that they incorporate a gender perspective.

31. Regarding its interaction with the task forces, the Committee agreed on the following three levels: direct communication between the Chairperson of the Committee and the chairs of the task forces; influence the process at the country level, where case studies will be discussed through direct or indirect participation in such reviews; and influence the process at the intra-agency level through better communication between the members of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and their respective colleagues who participate in the task forces, since mainstreaming is not a responsibility that solely rests with the focal points. It was expected that those steps would ensure that the outputs of the task forces, such as their final reports or their guidelines for resident representatives would fully reflect a gender perspective. The outcome of the task forces was seen as an important test for assessing progress in mainstreaming. Finally, the Chairperson of the Committee will convey the concern of the Committee to mainstream a gender perspective, as well as the Committee's offer of cooperation, to the meeting of Senior Officials and to ACC.

32. As to the preparation of a mission statement, it was agreed that the Platform for Action, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the results of related conferences and summits will provide the frame of reference. Existing examples of mission statements (UNDP, UNICEF, IFAD, WFP, UNFPA) will be further studied, and members are requested to send examples of such statements to the Division for the Advancement of Women. A recent statement of the Secretary-General on the situation of women in Afghanistan was mentioned as containing important elements that could be included in a mission statement.

33. The Committee welcomed the background paper on mainstreaming and coordination that was before the Committee, and considered it as the start for a system-wide examination of the current status of mainstreaming. It should serve as the framework for incorporating and reflecting the experience of other agencies, and should address lessons learned, as well as obstacles and shortcomings encountered in mainstreaming. The paper should also include

information on resources allocated for targeting and mainstreaming within the United Nations system and at the country level, including for gender training, as an important component of accountability.

34. Institutional values and cultures were considered as important qualitative dimensions in the mainstreaming discussion. While the number of women participating in all areas and at all levels remains an essential ingredient, institutional realities, including in management and career development, determine the sustainability of mainstreaming and cannot therefore be neglected.

35. Regarding policy enforcement and accountability, it was noted that some resistance persisted with regard to mainstreaming. A lack of accountability was noted, especially with regard to the availability of resources for programming and staffing. While experience existed, especially in programming, reporting by heads of agencies on the situation of mainstreaming at the field level should be added as an essential dimension. The importance of addressing gender issues and mainstreaming at the field level, including in resource allocation, was emphasized.

36. Potential difficulties in developing indicators for measuring the programmatic impact of mainstreaming, including for reasons of comparability between issue areas, were acknowledged. It was noted that it would not be possible to develop general indicators but that they would need to be specific to an issue or a situation so as to respond to a specific analysis and intervention. It was also argued that general indicators to provide policy guidance could be developed.

37. The Committee held an in-depth exchange on the status of women in the secretariats, based on a background paper that had been prepared jointly by the Focal Point on Women in the Secretariat and the secretariats of ICSC and CCAQ. The meeting identified a number of system-wide problems. A number of proposals were made to strengthen linkages, set priorities and proceed in a strategic manner.

38. The link between the participation and status of women in the United Nations secretariats and the attention to mainstreaming at the policy and programme level was noted. In that regard, a critical mass of women was necessary to make a difference. It was also noted, however, that different types of interventions were necessary to deal with issues of personnel, and with policy and programmatic issues.

3. Other matters

39. The meeting was briefed by the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women on reports that would be submitted over the next several months to intergovernmental bodies that required United Nations system contributions. Information was also provided on a number of upcoming expert group and other meetings that were organized jointly by the Division for the Advancement of Women and other United Nations entities in preparation for the work of the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-first session, which would also coincide with the Commission's fiftieth anniversary. The participation of the United Nations system in those events was encouraged.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda.

2. General exchange of views on the goals and objectives of the Committee.

3. Work programme and working methods of the Committee:

   (a) Mainstreaming: the need for a common conceptual framework;

   (b) Experiences and practices: the need for adequate interaction;

   (c) Gender balance throughout the system;

   (d) Suggestions for further action.

4. Other matters.

5. Adoption of the report, including dates and agenda for the second session.

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairperson: Rosario Green (United Nations)

Secretary: Kristen Timothy (United Nations)

United Nations, its entities and programmes

Office of Legal Affairs	Mahnoush Arsanjani
Department of Political Affairs	Maria D. Maldonado Joan Seymour
Department of Peacekeeping Operations	Manfred S. Eisele Mary Eliza Kimball
Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development	Angela E. V. King Christina Brautigam
Department for Development Support and Management Services	Hanifa Mezoui Tsu-Wei Chang
Department of Public Information	Susan Markham
Department of Administration and Management	Zohreh Tabatabai
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/ Centre for Human Rights	Purificacion V. Quisumbing Maria Vassiliou
Regional Commissions New York Office	Margaret McCaffery
United Nations Children's Fund	Misrak Elias Sherrill Whittington
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	Susan Brandway
United Nations Development Programme	Gary Gabriel Benjamin Gurman Miki Takihana
United Nations Development Fund for Women	Noeleen Heyzer Maxine Olson Achola Pala Okeyo
United Nations Environment Programme	Joanne Fox-Przeworski Rudy Van Dijck

United Nations Population Fund	Virginia Ofosu-Amaah
United Nations International Drug Control Programme	Gale Day
World Food Programme	Masood Hyder
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	William Lee
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements	Aliye Pekin Celik
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Rita Reddy Soren Jessen-Petersen Sophie von Stapelmohr
International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women	Martha Dueñas Loza Borjana Schieber
International Civil Service Commission	Enid Steward-Goffman Linda Saputelli
United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service	Barbara Adams
<u>Specialized agencies and related organizations</u>	
International Labour Organization	David Freedman Tita Prada de Mesa
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Boubacar Touré
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	Breda Pavlic
World Health Organization	Cecilia Rose-Oduyemi
World Bank	Ishrat Husain
International Monetary Fund	Harriet Shugarman
International Maritime Organization	Pamela Tansey
International Fund for Agricultural Development	Vera P. Weillhalle
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Ayumi Fujino
International Atomic Energy Agency	Merle S. Opelz Marlene O'Dell

Annex III

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

1. Under the aegis of ACC, the Committee will monitor, on the basis of performance indicators, the implementation by the United Nations system of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and gender-related recommendations emanating from recent United Nations conferences and summits within the purview of the system, and will advise ACC on ways and means of ensuring effective cooperation and coordination of the United Nations system in that regard, and in support of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the work of the United Nations system.

2. The Committee will formulate, for consideration and adoption by ACC, an advocacy or mission statement for the United Nations system on the advancement and empowerment of women and on gender mainstreaming, on the basis of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and other relevant intergovernmental directives.

3. Specifically, the Committee will:

(a) Identify gender-related policies and strategies and emerging issues requiring attention and collaboration by the United Nations system; performance indicators for monitoring progress; best practices to serve as examples for developing gender-sensitive methodologies, approaches and training; the major gaps and constraints that affect United Nations system cooperation in support to Member States for the implementation of gender-related conference recommendations; accountability mechanisms; and obstacles to progress;

(b) Advise ACC on practical approaches and tools for (i) implementing and monitoring the follow-up to the Platform for Action, including information collection and database development, research and policy analysis, operational activities, public information and outreach at the national, regional and international levels, and resource allocation and resource mobilization efforts; and (ii) mainstreaming a gender perspective in the activities of the United Nations system, including those of the inter-agency task forces established by ACC to follow up recent conferences and summits, as well as of other ACC committees and task forces, including the United Nations System-Wide Special Initiative on Africa;

(c) Support the work of ACC in relation to the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on the Status of Women and other intergovernmental bodies, as required, and in that context develop a multi-year programme around critical areas of concern, keeping in mind the five-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the work of the other functional commissions of the Council, and in the light of the guidance and instructions received from ACC, contribute to and support the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan on the advancement of women, 1996-2001, based on information provided by the United Nations system of organizations and other ACC bodies;

(d) On the basis of the above, report to ACC on progress in achieving the goals of overall policy and coordination, research, training and operational activities in relation to the implementation of the gender-related goals of major United Nations conferences, and mainstreaming a gender perspective throughout the work of the United Nations system;

(e) Serve as a forum for information exchange and the promotion of programme coordination and collaborative arrangements among the organizations of the United Nations system;

(f) Perform other tasks, including monitoring the follow-up of relevant ACC decisions on the status of women in the United Nations system.

4. Membership in the Committee should be as broad as possible, and should include gender in development focal points in the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. The Committee should draw on the expertise of its member organizations to fulfil its functions, and as necessary should make recourse to flexible mechanisms, such as the designation of task managers or lead agencies and/or the convening of task-oriented working groups, for example on policy and research, operational activities and critical issues relating to the status of women and women's well-being to assist it in addressing priorities within its mandate. The Committee will determine its own methods of work in accordance with its terms of reference.

Chair:	United Nations
Secretariat:	Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat
Periodicity of meetings:	The Committee will normally meet once a year, preferably in conjunction with the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Annex IV

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND DOCUMENTATION FOR THE SECOND SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

(New York, 5 and 6 March 1997)

1. Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda.

2. Mainstreaming: review of conceptual and practical aspects.

Documentation

Paper to be prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, with system-wide input

3. Mission or advocacy statement on the advancement and empowerment of women and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective.

4. Indicators, parameters for assessing best practices, and policy enforcement and accountability: issues of coordination and mainstreaming and implications for further action.

Documentation

Discussion papers to be prepared by the Joint Consultative Group on Policy Women in Development Subgroup

5. Interaction with ACC machinery:

(a) Task forces on conference follow-up: next steps;

Documentation

Reports by the Chairperson of the Committee, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund and others

(b) Cooperation with other ACC machinery: the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions, the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, and the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development;

Documentation

Oral report by the International Labour Organization and discussion note by the International Monetary Fund, in collaboration with the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Division for the Advancement of Women

6. Women in the peace process: issues of mainstreaming.

Documentation

Paper to be prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with system-wide input

7. Other matters:

(a) Briefing by the Division for the Advancement of Women on upcoming reporting requirements of the United Nations system;

(b) World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, 1999;

(c) Exchange of information on upcoming joint activities;

(d) New ideas for future action;

(e) Any other business.

8. Adoption of the report, including dates and agenda for the third session.

Annex V

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY TO THE CHAIRPERSONS OF THE ACC INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCES ON INTEGRATED CONFERENCE FOLLOW-UP

The ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality held its first session in New York on 22 and 23 October 1996.

The newly established Committee had a lengthy discussion on the question of mainstreaming a gender perspective in the activities of the United Nations system, including mainstreaming gender in the work of the ACC machinery.

According to the terms of reference of the Committee, it should advise ACC on practical approaches and tools for, inter alia, "... mainstreaming a gender perspective in the activities of the United Nations system, including those of the inter-agency task forces established by ACC to follow up recent conferences and summits ..."

The Committee was aware that the task forces set up by ACC to ensure integrated follow-up to the recent United Nations global conferences have a commitment to focus on gender issues in relation to their areas of work, in particular the negative effects of gender-based inequality in those areas. At the same time, participants expressed their hope that such a commitment would be fully reflected in the practical work of the task forces, including in the preparation of country reviews and other activities of the task forces, and in any proposals for follow-up.

I would therefore appreciate receiving information from you on the steps being taken by the task force that you convene and its subgroups to address gender issues and to incorporate a gender perspective in the activities being undertaken and in proposals for follow-up.

I refer you to the agreed conclusions 1996/1 on poverty eradication adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 1996, in particular to the conclusions contained therein on mainstreaming a gender perspective in United Nations activities for poverty eradication, which may serve to illustrate some of the measures that could be envisaged in completing the work of the task forces and developing follow-up. For example:

(a) Promoting an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in formulating and implementing both macroeconomic and microeconomic policies;

(b) Use of data disaggregated by sex in research, analysis and monitoring;

(c) Review of existing statistical indicators from a gender perspective, and inclusion of indicators on the gender dimension;

(d) Gender impact analysis of the design and implementation of policies and programmes;

(e) Integration of a gender perspective into the monitoring and evaluation of results, especially with respect to operational activities;

(f) Participation of women in the design, planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes.

Such steps should allow gender-specific factors to become more visible so that they can be addressed.

The Committee also identified the participation of women in education, training and capacity-building programmes and projects as an important element in gender mainstreaming.

The Committee asked me to draw your attention to the particular sections of the outcomes of recent global conferences that are specifically related to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as a useful reference for your work; please see the table attached for the cross-references provided.

The Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality is well aware that the work of the task forces has progressed since they were established and that their work is scheduled for completion in 1997. However, it considered that the work still to be accomplished should fully incorporate a gender perspective.

Although the Committee noted that responsibility for mainstreaming rests with all staff system-wide, and thus also with the task forces, the establishment of direct links between the Committee and the task forces is called for to ensure full implementation of conference outcomes, particularly at the country level. The Committee wishes to offer its assistance and cooperation to achieve that goal both in the near term and in the follow-up phase.

I would be grateful if copies of reports, case studies and other materials generated by your task force could be sent to my office. The Committee's focal points for the task forces, in addition to participating in the work of the task forces, will assist the Committee in reviewing the output of the task forces from a gender perspective.

The Committee has designated UNIFEM and UNFPA, which are already participants or conveners of one or more of the task forces, to serve as liaisons on the specific question of mainstreaming a gender perspective.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to express appreciation to you in advance for supplying the information requested, and for extending your cooperation in establishing links between the task forces and the Committee.

(Signed) Rosario Green
Chairperson
Inter-Agency Committee on Women and
Gender Equality

Relationship of the Beijing Platform for Action with the outcomes of other major conferences and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

Fourth World Conference on Women	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development a/	World Conference on Human Rights b/	International Conference on Population and Development c/	World Summit for Social Development d/
Areas of concern	Articles 1,2,3, 4	Chapter 4 (4.27), Chapter 5 (5.12), 24 (24.2(f)	Section I (8, 10, 18, 21, 30, 33)	Principles 4, 9, 10	Principle (j), Commitments 3, 5, 6, 8
Poverty	Articles 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 related to specific measures on women's participation in the economy, access to social services and economic rights	Chapter 3 (3.2, 3.4-3.9) 5B(5.21)		Chapter IIIB(3.16, 3.18), VA(5.4)	Chapter IIA26(g), 27(a), 29(a,c,), 30(b), IIB31(f),,k), 32(a,b,h), 33, 34(b), IIC35(c), 36(k), 37(e), IID38(j), 39(b,d,h), 41(f)
Education and Training	Article 5, Article 10, Article 11 (1c), Article 14 (2d)	Chapter 5B (5.37, 5.62) 8 (8.10, 8.25, 24 (24.2(e), 24.3(c), 35 (35.25(b), 35.25(b)), 36 (36.4(a), 36.5(c,m), 36.13(a))		Chapter IVA(4.3(c), 4.4(b)Chapter XIA(11.5, 11.6,11.8, 11.9),	Chapter IVC74(l)
Health	Article 12, Article 14 (2b), Article 16 (1 d,e)	Chapter 5B (5.49-5.52), 6 (6.8, 6.11, 6.13, 6.18, 6.21, 6.27(c), 6.29), 24 (24 2(g), 24.3(e))		Chapter IVA(4.11), VII, VIIIC,D	
Violence	Article 6, also see general recommendation 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	24(24.2(h))	Section II(3)	Chapter IVA(4.4(e), 4.9), VA(5.5)	Chapter IVF79(a,b)
Armed conflict	Article 8			Chapter IVA(4.10), IXC(9.20(a)), XD(10.22(f), 10.25)	Chapter IVE76(b) .
Employment, economic structures	Article 11, Article 14 (2 e,c,g,h)	24 (24.3(f,g)), 29 (29.7), 30 (30.17, 30.24). 32 (32.14(c))		Chapter IVA(4.4(d,g), 4.7, 4.8, 4.13),	Chapter IIIB53(c,f,i), IIIC54(c), 55(f,, 56, IIIE64(b,c,e)
Power and decision-making	Article 7, Article 8, Article 14 (2 e,f), Article 16	Chapter 7 (7.4, 7.26), 24 (24.3(a), 24.10)		Chapter IVA(4.3(b), 4.4(a))	
Mechanisms	Article 3	Chapter 5B (5.28), 8 (8.45, 8.49), 24 (24.3(b), 24.8)	Section II(3)	Chapter XIIA(12.2(b), 12.4, 12.7), B(12.16),	
Human rights of women	All articles	24 (24.4, 24.5)	Section II(3)	Chapter IVA(4.4(c,f), 4.5, 4.6, 4.12),	Chapter IVB(b,c,d),

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Mass media	Article 5	24 (24.3(i)), 36 (36.10(k))		Chapter XIB(11.16)	
Environment	Article 7, Article 8, Article 14	Chapter 5B (5.33, 5.37, 5.46, 5.48) 10 (10.5, 10.10, 10.11, 10.16), 11 (11.3(b,f), 11.13, 11.18(c), 11.27) 12 (12.14(a), 12.24(a), 12.28(c), 12.37(c), 12.57(f)), 13 (13.11(c), 13.16(h), 13.21(b)), 14 (14.14(b), 14.17, 14.18(b), 14.27(a), 14.81(b), 14.91(b)), 17 (17.15, 17.82(a), 17.94(b), 17.95(b)), 18 (18.9(c), 18.19, 18.22, 18.33(b), 18.34(d), 18.45, 18.48(b), 18.50(b), 18.59(e), 18.62, 18.68, 18.80(d)), 19 (19.22), 20 20.20, 20.26(b), 20.27(b), 20.28(a)) 21 (21.19, 21.25(d), 21.46(c), 24 (24.2(a-d), 24.3(d,h), 24.6, 24.7), 25 (25.14), 26 (26.9), 28 (28.2(d)), 31 (31.4(g)), 32 (32.2, 32.5(f), 32.6(d), 32.8(c), 33 (33.8), 34 (34.14(c))			
Girl child	All articles where status as a child is not an issue, Article 16 (1 (d,f), 2)			Chapter IVB	

Source: Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, January 1996.

a/ Agenda 21.
b/ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.
c/ Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.
d/ Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.